earlier, the FCIL including its Talcher Unit was closed down w.e.f. 05.09.2002.

(b) The Government is taking suitable measures to explore the possibilities of revival of sick/closed fertilizer Public Sector Undertakings including the Talcher Unit of Fertilizer Corporation of India.

(c) Does not arise.

New pharmaceutical policy

441. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced the New Pharmaceutical Policy;

(b) if so, the salient features of the new policy; and

(c) the benefit to be made available to pharmaceutical companies for making available cheaper drugs to weaker sections of the society?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) However, a Draft Cabinet Note on National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 has been circulated to various Departments/Ministries for seeking their comments and the replies are awaited. Some of the salient features of the proposed policy include Strengthening of Drug Regulatory System. (by Health Department), Strengthening of patent office infrastructure. (by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion), Focus on Research and Development—Process Development, Drug Discovery, Drug Development and Clinical Trials, Human Resources Development in Pharmaceutical Sciences through more institutes like National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Rationlisation of Excise duty on pharmaceuticals, Stremlining System of Bulk Procurement of Drugs by Government. (like the system of Tamil Nadu, Delhi Government), Promotion of Generic Drugs. (in purchase by Government hospitals), Strengthening of Pharma CPSEs, Schemes for providing accessibility of drugs to the poor especially BPL families, Schemes of

interest subsidy for implementation of Schedule M (of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945) for Good Manufacturing Practices, Schemes for Settlement of old dues under Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1979, Re-structuring of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), pricing to be applied to the specific drugs as listed under National List of Essential Medicine, 2003 and formulations based on 74 bulk drugs under DPCO, 95.

After receipt of comments of various departments, the draft policy would be placed before the Cabinet for approval.

Delinking procurement price from M.S.P.

442. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to delink the procurement price from the Minimum Support Price; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) A proposal to purchase foodgrains at a rate higher than the MSP has been formulated in the Department of Food and Public Distribution, to ensure that the required quantity of foodgrains are procured to meet the commitments under the TPDS and other foodgrains based Welfare Schemes.

Strengthening PDS

443. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal to strengthen PDS keeping in view the changes in the Essential Commodities Act and the recent price rise;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?